



ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

LOOKING AFTER
OUR KIDS



AbSec News

Issue 19 July 2015

Welcome to the latest edition of the AbSec News. This issue provides readers an overview of the past six months and some key pieces of AbSec activity that has occurred.

Sadly, Angela Webb has left us earlier this year in May. We would like to thank Angela for her commitment to Aboriginal children and young people being raised in a safe, loving environment, strong in culture.

Looking to the future, AbSec has recently undertaken strategic planning sessions with its members and stakeholders. This has been a positive process in which valuable feedback has been gained. It is our aim to launch our refreshed Strategic Plan for 2015-2018 in July 2015.

Over the coming months, AbSec will be looking forward to engaging our key stakeholders on some of the issues facing Aboriginal children, young people and families and the agencies that supports them. We remain committed to ensuring strong cultural safeguards are in place for Aboriginal children and young people, supported by a solid sustainable Aboriginal safety-net across NSW.

As a final note, I encourage you to have a look at the Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse site (<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au>) to read through the recent public hearing on out-of-home care and take the opportunity to provide a submission into many of the case studies being explored.

Enjoy the read!

Tim Ireland

A/Chief Executive Officer



ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

LOOKING AFTER
OUR KIDS

Strengthen the Aboriginal Child Placement Principles, don't water them down...

The Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat (AbSec) is firmly committed to the benefits of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principles as good practice in working to support Aboriginal children and young people in safe, secure and loving environments; strong in culture.

The Principles were designed to ensure that Aboriginal children and young people impacted by child protection and out of home care have the right to ensure their identity, sense of belonging, and connection to culture is adhered to alongside the need to make certain that they are safe in their community. These Principles have been in place in NSW since 1987.

This is in direct response to the fact that Aboriginal children were removed from their families, (known as the Stolen Generations), and other appalling practices by Government aimed at destroying Aboriginal cultural practices, resulting in Aboriginal children and young people having no sense of belonging or struggling to find their identity throughout their adult lives.

Ms Dana Clarke, Chairperson of AbSec is appalled that any consideration is given to removing the Aboriginal Child Placement Principles, as suggested in an article by Jeremy Sammut from the Centre for Independent Study, which would further jeopardise the future of Aboriginal children and young people, stating:

'Our children are always our priority, and we as proud Aboriginal people are best placed to support our children to grow into healthy adults – given we have the necessary means to be able to do this, the safety of our children, in all aspects of their life, is paramount.' AbSec's view is that it is an injustice and offensive to assert that culture, belonging and identity are unimportant in the context of a child's quality of life. A rich upbringing for any child is brought about by inclusion of their culture and having a sense of belonging, which is supported by the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child.

The Aboriginal Child Placement Principles are in place to ensure a process is followed for Aboriginal children

and young people who may be at risk of entering the child protection and out of home care system. This should be about ensuring the best support is provided for Aboriginal children and young people, however, they are not applied consistently and require strengthening.

Every Aboriginal child has the right to access their culture and community, creating belonging and enriching identity over time. The risk in not following these Principles provides a path for taking away this important aspect of a child's life, and hindering a child's social and emotional development.

Recent suggestions of removing the Aboriginal Child Placement Principles, as suggested by the Centre for Independent Study, in favour of less costly approaches to care is alarming. Removing these Principles rather than ensuring a robust care system that caters to the developmental and cultural needs of Aboriginal children and young people.

AbSec is in full agreement with the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) in calling for the Aboriginal Child Placement Principles to be strengthened in practice.

Best practice is about strong and effective application of the Principles, having meaningful Cultural Support Planning and other mechanisms that ensure the best possible outcome for Aboriginal children and young people impacted by the child protection and out of home care system.

Working to strengthen the application of the Principles is a national conversation that should first start in NSW as the largest child protection and out of home care system affecting Aboriginal children and young people, families and communities.

AbSec is clear in its view that there should not be a conversation that diminishes the rights of Aboriginal people in this Country to maintain culture, identity and belonging, as embodied within the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.



ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

LOOKING AFTER
OUR KIDS

Safe Home for Life Reforms – Guardianship Orders

The Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat (AbSec) is committed to supporting Aboriginal children, young people, carers and families through the Safe Home for Life Reforms and firmly believes that Guardianship Orders are not a suitable option for Aboriginal children and young people without a more robust safeguarding approach to ensure cultural supports are embedded, ensuring a minimum standard that is accepted by.

Under Guardianship Orders there is no monitoring of the child or young person's engagement with their family or extended family, there is no accountability with regard to the cultural plan and no demonstration of connection to culture that is supported by ongoing oversight and safeguarding.

AbSec believes there needs to be safeguards in place for Aboriginal children and young people in care to ensure their cultural needs are being maintained, which is focused towards creating a sense of belonging and identity over time.

Should Guardianship Orders be considered appropriate for an Aboriginal kinship/foster carer there needs to be a structure around the support provided to Aboriginal carers in order to maintain their caring role.

AbSec firmly believes Guardianship Orders are an easier option for the Department of Family and Community Services to shift the responsibility to the Guardian (carer), thereby having no further involvement by the Department in the care and support of the child – particularly in meeting their cultural support needs.

Guardianship may appear as an easier outcome of the child protection process yet the burden on the Guardian is significant. It is AbSec's view that a greater level of cultural safeguarding and support should be put in place to foster the notion of permanency for Aboriginal children and young people.

AbSec considers that as part of the Safe Home for Life Reforms, cultural advisers are to be established to support the effective cultural safeguarding for an Aboriginal child or young people subject to a guardianship order, as well as provide exceptional support to Guardians in their performing their caring role – recognising the importance of contact and connection to country and family.

AbSec is working towards building a stronger evidence base around guardianship, adoption and other key NSW Government reforms to showcase how these initiatives may or may not impact Aboriginal children and young people longer term.





ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

LOOKING AFTER
OUR KIDS

Child safety and wellbeing top priority for Aboriginal out-of-home care providers

The Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat (AbSec) acknowledges recent media coverage regarding national child protection tragedies.

The safety and wellbeing of children is the number one priority within the out-of-home care sector, and with approximately one in three of those children being from an Aboriginal background, AbSec remains firm in working to ensure that the sector provides the best possible care to Aboriginal children and young people.

AbSec and its members affirm the fundamental human rights outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the right to grow up safe from harm, to be connected to family, community and culture, and to participate in decision making. From this rights-based framework, we work to ensure that Aboriginal children and young people are safe and cared for in loving environments, strong in culture and belonging. AbSec, in partnership with government and non-government organisations, is committed to expanding the capacity of Aboriginal communities to actively engage in the child welfare sector as an important step towards genuine self-determination.

While changes have been implemented and rigorous screening and monitoring processes have been developed to help keep children safe, these recent reports remind all of us in the sector and the community more broadly of our ongoing obligation to review and improve these systems and safeguards to protect vulnerable children and young people.

Children and young people in out-of-home care are amongst the most vulnerable people in our State. It is essential that services that seek to support vulnerable children, young people and their families are properly resourced to provide not only the immediate safety and physical necessities for children and young people, but also seek to maximise the long term opportunities for children and young people to meet their potential and participate fully in their communities.

AbSec remains committed to ensure there is a strong Aboriginal sector that provides those safety-net supports to Aboriginal children, young people and families, now and into the future.



ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

LOOKING AFTER
OUR KIDS

AbSec welcomes increased funding

The Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat (AbSec) welcomes the NSW Government's announcement of increased investment in the child protection sector.

This announcement is critical to providing quality supports to Aboriginal children and young people who are over represented in the child protection and out of home care (OOHC) sector, and AbSec is committed to working with the government to ensure the appropriate level of investment is targeted to Aboriginal children and young people across NSW.

"We encourage the NSW Government to continue to work with AbSec to build capacity of the Aboriginal OOHC and child protection sector to support the ongoing transition of Aboriginal children and young people to Aboriginal OOHC agencies" said Tim Ireland A/CEO.

It is critical that we work to ensure quality safeguards are in place for Aboriginal children and young people including cultural planning.

AbSec would have liked to have seen greater investment in supporting young people leaving care (aftercare) to ensure their transition from the child protection system occurs, recognising the need for support into early adulthood and independent living to build resilience, engage in employment or study, and development informal networks that empower individuals and set a positive life course.

Furthermore AbSec believes an increase in funding is required for early intervention supports which would see Aboriginal families provided supports and services earlier within a holistic child and family sense.

Mr Ireland stated "We need to ensure that Aboriginal children and young people are raised in safe Aboriginal families and communities, strong in spirit and identity, with every opportunity for lifelong wellbeing, to do this we need a coordinated effort of supports and services."

AbSec is keenly interested and receptive to discussions with the NSW Government regarding the future of Aboriginal Intensive Family Based Services across the state, to identify the most appropriate way forward for ensuring quality cultural responses for Aboriginal children and families.



ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

LOOKING AFTER
OUR KIDS

Home Truths

Rethinking our response to family violence

Research to Practice Seminar, Monday 27 April 2015, Australian Technology Park

AbSec staff members Julie Welsh and Vicki Barton attended the Research to Practice Seminar - **Home Truths: rethinking our response to family violence** held on Monday 27 April at the Australian Technology Park in Sydney.

David Mandel from David Mandel and Associates, USA spoke about improving case practice in domestic violence cases involving children. David highlighted the 'Safe and Together' model focusing on survivor strength based approaches. Safe and Together principles include keeping children safe and together with the non-offending parent, partnering with non-offending parent as a default position and intervention with perpetrator to reduce risk and harm to children.

Dr Allan Wade from the University of Seattle USA, spoke about Exploring the language of violence to expose domination and resistance. Focus was also on how language and terminology especially when reporting incidents of abuse and violence, can impact a person to have a view of an incident.

Rodney Vlasis, from the 'No To Violence (Male Family Violence Prevention Association)' based in Victoria spoke about working with men to end violence against women.

Ivan Clarke and Victor Morgan, from the Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV) spoke about the Strong Aboriginal Men (SAM) program. This program focusses on engaging Aboriginal men in understanding and preventing violence, as well as having the opportunity to address trauma and shame of their own histories of abuse, and time to reflect on how this has shaped their adult lives.

Participants also heard about a survivor's perspective from Tiffany, who spoke about the trauma she suffered within a DV relationship, and how she developed the strength to leave that relationship and move on with her life for herself and her son.

AbSec believes we need to continue having public discussion about this important issue.



Right: Aunty Millie Ingram, Minister Brad Hazzard, AbSec Staff Julie Welsh & Vicki Barton.



ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

LOOKING AFTER
OUR KIDS

Diploma in Child, Youth and Family Intervention Update

The Diploma in Child, Youth and Family Intervention held its first workshop 21-23 April 2015, this is a collaboration between AbSec, Aboriginal Learning Circle and TAFE NSW and is facilitated by Marilyn Leeks and Cynthia Briggs.

Marilyn has taught on the last three deliveries for the Diploma Child Youth and Family Intervention to agencies from around the state. Marilyn is social work trained and has extensive experience in child protection. Cynthia has experience as a teacher and lecturer and extensive experience in child protection and family support.

There are 19 participants registered in Diploma, which is targeted at Aboriginal OOHC agencies (AbSec members). The Diploma is expected to hold its final workshop in September 2015.

Its important that access to continual learning for a strong and capable Aboriginal sector in the future.





ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

LOOKING AFTER
OUR KIDS

Wingecarribee Aboriginal Community Services Expo and Family Fun Day

The Wingecarribee Aboriginal Community Services Expo and Family Fun Day was held on Friday 20 February in Bowral in the Southern Highlands. AbSec attended to support the local Aboriginal community and to raise awareness about the need for more Aboriginal Foster Carers for our children and young people.

This was a great day for all to enjoy. Aunty Valmai Mulcahy Welcomed everyone to Country. Young children were entertained by the talented Johnny Huckle and delighted by his song 'Wombat Wobble'. Sean Choolburra was the MC for the event and had adults and children on stage to dance to 'Gammin Style'. The event was supported by a myriad of agencies providing services to the Southern Region and was a great opportunity for local community members to access these agencies in a friendly and fun atmosphere. The day also included traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dances, as well as an outdoor broadcast by Koori Radio 93.7Fm. We look forward to catching up with everyone at their next event!





ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

LOOKING AFTER
OUR KIDS

Teenage Education Payment (TEP)

Just a reminder to carers that the Teenage Education Payment (TEP) is available to assist authorised foster, relative and kinship carers to keep 16 and 17 year olds in their care in education or training. Eligible carers will receive payments of up to \$6000 per annum. Carers of 16 and 17 year olds in out-of-home care who are engaged in education and training are eligible. The payments are made at the beginning of each school term or TAFE semester, when families provide a copy of the Family Tax Benefit A showing that the young person is in full time education or training.

Further details regarding the Teenage Education Payment can be found on the AbSec website

<http://www.absec.org.au/services-we-provide/foster-care.html>



ABORIGINAL CARERS NEEDED

**Aboriginal children and young people in OOHC need
Aboriginal foster/kinship carers**

Aboriginal foster carers play a vital role in the lives of Aboriginal kids.
By giving these children safe,
caring homes, you'll help ensure their wellbeing and maintain strong
cultural connections.

An Aboriginal child's cultural identity is an important part of who they
are. Children who are strong in their culture have higher self-esteem,
confidence and expectations of what they can achieve.

If you know of someone that you think would make a great foster carer,
please let them know and encourage them to contact us for further
information **AbSec on 1800 888 698**





ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

LOOKING AFTER
OUR KIDS

Disability Inclusion Plan

The NSW Disability Inclusion Plan was officially launched on Thursday 26th February 2015 by the NSW Minister for Disability Services John Ajaka MLC during the Sydney Opera House Access Program event. The NSW Disability Inclusion Plan supports the NSW Government's commitment to remove systemic and attitudinal barriers so that people with disability have a better opportunity to live a meaningful life and enjoy the full benefits of membership in the community. Achieving an inclusive society is a long term vision that will require consistent efforts from government and the wider community.

The plan is the product of a collective effort between the NSW Govt., community groups, organisations and stakeholders who contributed to the development of the plan.

You can read and download the plan and factsheet about the plan at www.facs.nsw.gov.au/dip

National Disability Services (NDS) Conference

On the 16th and 17th February 2015, AbSec's disability team, Noel, Rob and Brian, attended the NDS Conference in Sydney. The conference was titled "500 Days and Counting" which highlighted the number of days before the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) starts rolling out across NSW.

Whilst the conference drew attention to a number of issues relating to the trial site in the Hunter, it also highlighted the bi-partisan support that both sides of Government have to the NDIS.

Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations need to be ready for the rollout of the NDIS across the state and to also be ready to provide quality supports to the community when the rollout is fully implemented from 2018.



Above: Brian, Noel & Rob from the Disability Team at Absec attended the NDS conference along with 800 other delegates.

Continuing work

AbSec are continuing to work with interested Aboriginal community controlled organisations across NSW to build capacity to provide disability supports to their local community.

We would like to hear from you if you are interested in this space and you can contact any of the team on 02 9559 5299.



ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

LOOKING AFTER
OUR KIDS

Disability Service Standards Third Party Verification

AbSec is proud to announce that we have completed our Disability Service Standards Third Party Verification process and have achieved verification against the Disability Service Standards.

This is a great achievement for AbSec in light of our Disability Sector Development Program.

Congratulations to all involved!!!



Above: AbSec staff Rob Roberts, Noel Walker & Acting CEO Tim Ireland & Craig Layton, ADHC & AbSec Brian Edwards & Rebecca Gale ADHC



**Are you an Aboriginal Community
Controlled Organisation?**
**Are you interested in providing support to
an Aboriginal person with disability and
their family in your local area?**
Want to know more?



The Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat (AbSec) is running a project aimed at building up an Aboriginal community controlled sector to deliver supports for Aboriginal people with disability, their families and carers across NSW.

The project is about looking at how our Aboriginal community controlled organisations currently work and what it takes to deliver disability supports against government standards, and community and individual expectations.

AbSec wants to partner up with interested organisations that aren't delivering disability supports at the moment to develop their capacity, and get them ready to deliver disability supports – this means we will work with you to go through your organisation to get you thinking about what it means to provide a disability support that meets a person's need.

Our project is about creating an Aboriginal sector that will be there into the future to support our community in getting the support they need. We want to hear from you if you're currently an Aboriginal community controlled organisation in NSW, and not delivering any kinds of funded disability service in your community.

If you're keen to find out more about the project or AbSec, call 02 9559 5299, visit our website at www.absec.org.au or send an e-mail to Noel Walker at noel.walker@absec.org.au to arrange a time for us to come out and have a chat with your organisation.



ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

LOOKING AFTER
OUR KIDS

Aboriginal Family Group Conferencing pilot – update on how we are traveling

The AbSec Aboriginal Family Group Conferencing model is based on the characteristics of participatory activities in New Zealand and the Aboriginal family decision-making model known as *Dhum Djirri* developed by the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA). The AbSec Aboriginal Family Group Conferencing model operates on the principles of Aboriginal participatory decision-making as specifically expressed in Sections 11, 12 and 13 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (NSW). It is essentially about empowering families by allowing them to actively contribute to addressing care and protection concerns in a whole of family; child centred way.

The purpose of *Aboriginal Family Group Conferencing* is to encourage all relevant family members, elders and significant people as deemed appropriate, to meet face-to-face and work toward an agreed way forward in order to address any risk and/or safety concerns relating to an Aboriginal child or young person who are currently involved in the child protection and out-of-home care system. The overall goal of *Aboriginal Family Group Conferencing* is for the child (where appropriate), family and others to actively participate in the development of a 'Family Plan' which is designed to articulate the strategies required in order to address the risk and/or safety concerns and to ensure the safety, welfare and wellbeing of those children and young people.

The Aboriginal Family Group Conferencing pilot is due for completion in October 2015 and AbSec will be providing a report to FACS regarding the successes and lessons learnt through the pilot program. The pilot is currently operating across three FaCS districts; Central Coast, Illawarra/Shoalhaven and Northern NSW.

Aboriginal Family Group Conferencing Training Goes Ahead!

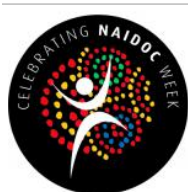
Participants from all over the state converged on Port Macquarie in February 2015 for the inaugural *Certificate IV in Community Services Work - Aboriginal Family Group Conferencing*.

The training is an initiative between AbSec and the Aboriginal Learning Circle and TAFE NSW Northern Institute. There are 22 participants enrolled in the training coming from various backgrounds including non-government, community and government agencies and bring with them various degrees of experience with family group conferencing models.

The training will provide the basic information around working within a child protection context and how the model of Aboriginal Family Group Conferencing can complement and add value to casework with the view of better engaging with families and allowing them greater decision-making opportunities, leading to more permanent solutions.

Participants will gain a better understanding of the Aboriginal Family Group Conferencing model AbSec is currently piloting across in NSW and how this approach supports recent changes to the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*.

The training is being coordinated over the coming months and is expected to be completed by end of June 2015. Plans for any future training have not yet been confirmed but anyone who is interested is encouraged to contact Michael Higgins (Senior Project Officer) on 9559 5299 or michael.higgins@absec.org.au, who will keep you informed of any new AFGC opportunities in the future.



**We all Stand on
Sacred Ground:**

Learn, Respect & Celebrate

5 - 12 JULY 2015

Save the date:

NAIDOC WEEK

5-12 July 2015



ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

LOOKING AFTER
OUR KIDS

Aboriginal Family Group Conferencing

AbSec Staff members Michael Higgins and Bev Sales presented at a recent Family Group Conferencing Best Practice forum hosted by the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (ACWA) in Sydney. Their presentation showcased the important work of Aboriginal Family Group Conferencing demonstrating best practice, starting with highly qualified and experienced Aboriginal facilitators that bring the much needed culturally appropriate response to the families they work with.



The Aboriginal Family Group pilot program first began in 2013. The Aboriginal facilitators Rod Broad and Bev Sales bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise into their roles.

The forum presentation was well received by a large audience of at least 150 participants. AbSec congratulates Michael and Bev on their story telling and acknowledge the excellent work of the Aboriginal Family Group Conferencing team.

Minister Hazzard visit to AbSec

The Hon. Brad Hazzard MP recently visited AbSec to hear from staff in relation to supporting Aboriginal children and young people in OOH, quality cultural planning and early intervention .

AbSec is looking forward to working with the Minister in supporting Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities better.





ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

LOOKING AFTER
OUR KIDS



Update from Fostering NSW



By Sharon Broady

Focus on the Need for Aboriginal Foster Carers in 2015

2014 was a busy year for Fostering NSW, from hosting a Statewide Out-of-Home-Care Recruitment Forum featuring a presentation from Burrin Dalai on recruitment strategies within the Aboriginal community, through partnering with AbSec on the [Aboriginal Foster Carer Recruitment Manual](#), to supporting the second Kids in Care Cup.

This year will see an even greater focus on the recruitment of Aboriginal carers with plans afoot to offer strategic marketing assistance to Aboriginal agencies over the coming 18 months, improvements to our referral processes enabling more accurate demographic data capture, and increased communication with Aboriginal agencies around capacity and areas of need.

In consultation with AbSec, Fostering NSW will also develop a comprehensive Aboriginal Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy that will explore the most effective ways to reach the community and deliver increased enquiries, applications and, ultimately, authorizations to Aboriginal agencies.

To kick off the year, Fostering NSW has released a great new video about the [2014 Kids in Care Cup](#) in which Aboriginal foster carers talk openly to us about the challenges and rewards of the role. Please share this resource via your own social media channels, newsletters and communications.

We look forward to working closely with AbSec and Aboriginal agencies in the out-of-home-care sector in 2015.

Save the date:

Kids in Care Cup

Sunday 19 September 2015

Sid Parrish Park

For further information visit: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Kids-in-Care-Cup/556993347656726>



ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

LOOKING AFTER
OUR KIDS

Acknowledging Sorry Day (26 May)

In acknowledging the significance of Sorry Day, AbSec held a morning tea at the Redfern Community Centre on Tuesday 26th May 2015. The morning tea brought together members of the Stolen Generations from the Kinchella Boys Home (KBH), Cootamundra Girls Home and Bomaderry Children's Home as well as community members and friends.

Two short films were shown, the first being the story of Ian 'Crow' Lowe a former child inmate of the notorious Kinchella Boys Home and the second was about the Cootamundra Girls and their experiences. For many in attendance, these stories brought back memories of abuse and sadness but also reflection on the incredible resilience these children had and the bonds they developed with each other. It was also an opportunity for those who did not know these stories to listen, learn and understand.

The morning tea brought the opportunity for those who wanted to sit around in a yarning circle and reflect on what this day means to them. There was laughter, some tears and some deadly grassroots discussions about the importance of Sorry Day and keeping it on Australia's calendar as a significant day in its own right.

AbSec is firmly committed to ensuring history is never swept under the carpet and forgotten, particularly when thinking about the intergenerational impacts government policies and practices have had on the children and families of Stolen Generation members today. Their voices must to be heard, as these families are still suffering, even with the Apology!





ANNIVERSARY OF APOLOGY TO STOLEN GENERATIONS

Friday 13 February 2015 was the 7th anniversary of the apology to the Stolen Generations.

Members of the Stolen Generation Council NSW/ACT attended the apology breakfast hosted by the NSW Government at Parliament House. Those present at the anniversary breakfast were addressed by Premier Mike Baird, Minister Dominello and Mr Kevin Rudd, with event MC Jeff McMullen.

Mr Lester Maher (who was sent to Kinchela Boys Home) said: "Our stories are testimony that will ensure the past will not be repeated, something we fear when we hear of the alarming levels of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care."

The breakfast was well received from members of the Stolen Generation Council NSW/ACT who stressed it was important to acknowledge the apology however there is still more work to do to support members of the Stolen Generation and to address intergenerational impacts.

The members attended a BBQ lunch at the NCIE in Redfern with community.



Wednesday 18 February 2015, seven members of the Stolen Generations Council NSW/ACT were invited to the launch of research focusing on the Long-term Outcomes of Forgotten Australians by the University of NSW. This was launched by the Hon Justice Peter McClellan AM, Chair, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Members of the Stolen Generation Council NSW/ACT felt this issue was contentious and that people should not forget or misplace the experiences of those of the Stolen Generation.

On Friday 27 February 2015, utilising the micro-grant from the Healing Foundation, AbSec hosted a lunch at the NCIE, Redfern for sixteen members of the Stolen Generations Council NSW/ACT.

By chance members met Kyle Vander Kyup who spent time sharing his journey and experience with members.

Over lunch members had the opportunity to share stories and discuss aspirations for future workshops and gatherings.

The lunch was enjoyed by all who attended, for some a therapeutic opportunity.





Cultural Gathering

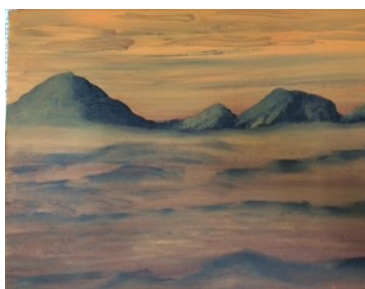
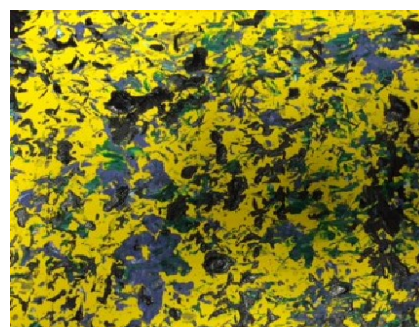
On Tuesday 27 and Wednesday 28 April 2015, AbSec hosted a cultural gathering for members of the Stolen Generation Council NSW/ACT with funding provided by the Healing Foundation.

The gathering was an artwork workshop attended by 15 members and facilitated by Christine Blakney and Matilda House. The beautiful works that were produced as part of the workshop will be exhibited later in the year.

Feedback from members was that it was an enjoyable workshop that provided them an opportunity to share experiences and interpret those stories into art.



A sample of some of the artwork made by participants





Cleansing and Healing Gathering—Brian Dowd The People Mechanic

Brian Dowd —The People Mechanic-facilitated the 2 day Cleansing and Healing Gathering for members of the Stolen Generation NSW/ACT. The aim of the gathering was to engage those affected directly and indirectly by past government practice. Those in attendance will had the opportunity to participate in a gathering that was culturally friendly and confidential, and focused on allowing individuals to develop new structures, routines and balances to:

- Cleanse past hurts.
- To heal current pain.
- Un program the negative voices and the faces of the past.
- Re Program positive directions for not only ourselves, but the faces of the future.
- Apply these techniques at home for positive spiritual and physical results

The workshop was enjoyed by participants with feedback from members positive and emotional.





ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

LOOKING AFTER
OUR KIDS

Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)

By Giuseppe Stramandinoli



The Sixth SNAICC National Conference will be held at the Convention Centre in Perth, on the lands of the traditional owners, the Noongar people from 15 to 17 September 2015.

The program is presently taking shape and promises to provide a broad range of presentations from communities, organisations and individuals in the key areas of out-of-home care, community, early childhood and family support.



SNAICC is hoping the Perth conference can build on the successes of its Fifth National Conference, held in Cairns in June 2013, which was attended by over 1100 delegates. The conference is regarded as the biggest forum for Indigenous children ever held in Australia.

The 2015 conference committee is pleased to announce that renowned national and international experts June Oscar, Professor Michael Chandler and Professor Fiona Stanley have been confirmed as keynote speakers so far.

June Oscar is the CEO of Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women's Resource Centre and a proud Bunuba woman from the remote Kimberley town of Fitzroy Crossing in WA.

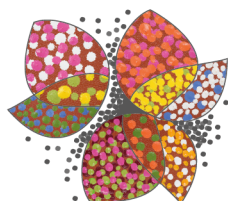
June is a champion for Indigenous Australian languages, social justice, women's issues and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

Professor Fiona Stanley is the Founding Director and Patron of the Telethon Kids Institute in Perth was named Australian of the Year in 2003 in recognition of her research on behalf of Australia's children and Aboriginal social justice.

Professor Michael Chandler is a developmental psychologist, Professor Emeritus, and Distinguished CIHR and MSFHR Investigator working at the University of British Columbia in Canada.

For any queries on the SNAICC Conference please contact our Conference Secretariat EECW on Tel: (03) 9863 7606, Email: eecw@eecw.com.au or our SNAICC Conference Coordinator, Poppy Bervanakis at (03) 9489 8099 or email: poppy.bervanakis@snaicc.org.au

More information can be found at www.snaicc.org.au/conference



For Our Children
Ngallak Koorlangka

6th SNAICC National Conference
15-17 September 2015, Perth



ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

LOOKING AFTER
OUR KIDS

Closing the Gap Report 2015

On 11 February 2015, the Federal Government released the 7th Closing the Gap Report 2015. The results of this report are devastating for Aboriginal communities.

The report shows the Federal Government is not on track to achieve targets, with only two of the seven targets stated to be on track.

While our Aboriginal OOHC agencies are contributing to the continuing services of closing the gap.

Ms Petrice Manton, General Manager Muloobinba said "I think we all have a commitment to doing so, and it makes our job as Aboriginal OOHC agencies more difficult when the government doesn't support ongoing issues to close the gap."

The Federal Government have failed in supporting Aboriginal people

Aboriginal OOHC Forum

On Friday 24 April 2015, AbSec hosted a issuing Forum for Aboriginal OOHC agencies to share emerging issues and positive experiences. The session facilitated by Felicity Ryan was a very informative day that also provided members an opportunity to network and build relationships as a strong sector.

AbSec is planning to host further information sessions throughout the year to inform its reining and ensure systemic concerns are appropriately represented. Should members wish to discuss this further, please contact AbSec on (02) 9559 5299.

Ear disease can cause loss of hearing.

The Care for Kids' Ears campaign is part of the Australian Government's commitment to improving eye and ear health services for Indigenous Australians for better education and employment outcomes.

The Care for Kids' Ears campaign aims to contribute to a reduction in ear disease in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by:

- Increasing awareness of the role that modifiable behaviours such as regular ear examinations/surveillance, treating early infections to completion, smoking, hygiene, breastfeeding and nutrition have in preventing the development of ear disease;
- Increasing awareness of the signs and symptoms of ear disease, especially of those that are non-visual;
- Increasing understanding of the link between ear disease and associated hearing loss;
- Increasing awareness that ear disease and hearing loss can have significant long-term consequences to language and cognition; and
- Increasing awareness of effective surveillance, prevention and treatment pathways.





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SAVE THE DATE!

AbSec Sector and Workers Conference 2015

Vibrant Sector, Capable Workers, Stronger Kids

Supporting Aboriginal children and young people to have the best possible future

TUESDAY 24TH – THURSDAY 26TH NOVEMBER 2015

Opal Cove Resort Opal Boulevard, Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

WORKERS CONFERENCE

Tuesday 24th – Wednesday 25th November, 2015

Themes:

- ❖ Early Intervention Good Practice
- ❖ Out of Home Care Good Practice
- ❖ Reforms in Practice

This conference is targeted to AbSec Aboriginal member agency workers working directly with Aboriginal Children, young people, families and communities

SECTOR CONFERENCE

Thursday November 26th, 2015

Themes:

- ❖ Cultural Support in Practice
- ❖ Voice of Aboriginal Children and Young People
- ❖ Innovative Practices

This conference is targeted to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal partners committed to good practice for Aboriginal children, young people and families

REGISTRATIONS OPENING SOON



Featuring:

- ❖ Keynote Speakers
- ❖ Workshops
- ❖ Symposiums
- ❖ Cultural Entertainment



CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Submissions close: 10 July 2015

For further information or questions please email Jessie.longbottom@absec.org.au or go to the AbSec



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AbSec facebook

Don't forget AbSec is on facebook so follow us to stay informed of events, news and community information or if you want to contact us, feel free!



Contact AbSec

Phone: 02 9559 5299

Email: admin@absec.org.au